

Study Maps Challenges and Opportunities for Pro-LGBT Companies Operating in Anti-LGBT Markets

Study shows multi-national corporations how to promote LGBT equality and strengthen growth

NEW YORK, January 22, 2016 — Fifty-eight percent of LGBT employees at multi-national corporations (MNCs) say their company has a nondiscrimination policy based on sexual orientation and transgender identity. However, LGBT-supportive MNCs struggle to extend that protection beyond their walls in anti-LGBT jurisdictions, given that seventy-five countries still criminalize same-sex sexual conduct¹. The Center for Talent Innovation's 10-market study (including Brazil, China, Hong Kong, India, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, Turkey, the UK, and the US), *Out in the World: Securing LGBT Rights in the Global Marketplace*, shows LGBT-supportive MNCs how to foster an inclusive and safe environment for employees both on and off corporate campuses in anti-LGBT geographies.

Co-authored by legal scholar Kenji Yoshino and CTI Founder and President Sylvia Ann Hewlett, the study of 1,964 LGBT professionals and 10,242 non-LGBT professionals maps the world into three categories: countries with LGBT-hostile laws (India, Russia, and Singapore); geographies with LGBT-unfriendly laws (China, Hong Kong, and Turkey); and countries with LGBT-friendly laws (Brazil, South Africa, the UK, and the US). The report highlights ways in which MNCs operating in LGBT-unfriendly and hostile jurisdictions might move markets and mores toward greater LGBT equality. Tactics fall within three models of engagement:

- The "When in Rome" model, in which companies adhere to the norms and local laws of the jurisdiction, but allow employees to opt-out of placement there.
- The "Embassy" model, in which companies enforce pro-LGBT policies in the workplace but do not seek to effect change outside their walls.
- The "Advocate" model, in which companies seek to change cultural attitudes outside the workplace.

The study reveals talent and consumer market pressures for advancing global LGBT equality. A pro-LGBT stance improves a company's ability to recruit talent and attract consumers, even outside of the LGBT pool: 72 percent of respondents who self-identify as LGBT allies say they are more likely to accept a job at a company that supports equal opportunities for LGBT employees. Eighty-two percent of ally respondents and 71 percent of LGBT individuals say they are more likely to purchase a good or service from a company that supports LGBT equality. LGBT employee engagement is higher, too: 84 percent of LGBT employees at supportive companies say they are proud to work for their employer (compared to 68 percent at unsupportive companies).

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¹ Aengus Carroll and Lucas Paoli Itaborahy, *State-Sponsored Homophobia: A World Survey of Laws; Criminalisation, Protection, and Recognition of Same-Sex Love* (International Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans and Intersex Association, May 2015), 28

“LGBT professionals who work for companies that make them feel safe from discrimination are more likely to be engaged and bring their authentic selves to work,” says Sylvia Ann Hewlett, founder and CEO of the Center for Talent Innovation. “Previous CTI research finds that when employers create an inclusive environment, they enjoy a competitive edge in their ability to recruit top talent, unleash innovative potential, and secure the loyalty of new market segments.”

Respondents suggest that companies in both hostile and in friendly markets impose varying levels of conformity demands on their LGBT employees. Fully 80 percent in Russia; 78 percent in Hong Kong; 61 percent in Brazil; and 46 percent in the US remain closeted in their professional lives. And of those who are out, many – fully 75 percent in China, 65 percent in Singapore, and 49 percent in Brazil – cover, or downplay, their LGBT identity.

“Societies and organizations need to awaken to the moral and market costs of asking LGBT individuals to convert, pass, or cover,” says Kenji Yoshino, the Chief Justice Earl Warren Professor of Constitutional Law at New York University. “Only when LGBT individuals feel free to live as openly as their straight or cisgendered colleagues can we say that LGBT equality has been achieved.”

The report showcases initiatives from MNCs including American Express and Ernst & Young LLP that are supporting and advocating for LGBT employees and their rights worldwide.

For more information on *Out in the World*, please click [here](#).

Research Sponsors:

American Express, Bank of America, Barclays, Bloomberg LP, BNY Mellon, BP, Chubb, Deutsche Bank, Eli Lilly and Company, Ernst & Young LLP, and Out Leadership

Research Authors:

Sylvia Ann Hewlett is an economist and the founding president and CEO of the Center for Talent Innovation (CTI), a nonprofit think tank where she chairs the Task Force for Talent Innovation, a group of more than 90 global companies focused on fully realizing the new streams of talent in the global marketplace. She is also the co-director of the Women’s Leadership Program at the Columbia Business School.

She is the author of 11 Harvard Business Review articles and 12 critically acclaimed nonfiction books including *Off-Ramps and On-Ramps*; *Winning the War for Talent in Emerging Markets*; *Forget a Mentor, Find a Sponsor* (named one of the best business books of 2013); and *Executive Presence: The Missing Link Between Merit and Success* (an Amazon “Best Book of the Month,” June 2014). In 2014, she was recognized as the Most Influential International Thinker by HR magazine and was awarded the Global Diversity Award by the European Diversity Awards. Her writings have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Financial Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*; she’s a featured blogger on the *HBR Blog Network*, and a frequent guest on television, appearing on *Newshour with Jim Lehrer*, *Charlie Rose* and *The Today Show*. Dr. Hewlett, who has taught at Cambridge, Columbia, and Princeton universities, earned her BA at Cambridge University and her PhD in economics at London University.

Kenji Yoshino is the Chief Justice Earl Warren Professor of Constitutional Law at NYU School of Law. He is the author of three books—*Speak Now: Marriage Equality on Trial* (2015); *A Thousand Times More Fair: What Shakespeare’s Plays Teach Us about Justice* (2011); and *Covering: The Hidden Assault on Our Civil Rights* (2006). Yoshino has also published broadly in academic journals, including the *Harvard Law Review*, *Stanford Law Review*, and *Yale Law Journal*. He has received several distinctions for his teaching, most recently the Podell Distinguished Teaching award in 2014. He serves on Harvard’s Board of Overseers, as well as on the Advisory Board of the Center for Talent Inclusion, the Board of the Brennan Center for Justice, the External Advisory Panel for the World Bank Group, and the Global Advisory Board for Out Leadership. He earned his BA at Harvard College, his M.Sc. at Oxford University (as a Rhodes Scholar), and his J.D. from Yale Law School.

About the Research:

This research consists of two surveys; Insights In-Depth® sessions (a proprietary web-based tool used to conduct voice-facilitated virtual focus groups) involving more than 100 employees from our Task Force organizations; and one-on-one interviews with 58 individuals in Brazil, China, Hong Kong, India, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, Turkey, the UK, and the US.

The multi-national survey was conducted online between November 2014 and January 2015 among 12,206 respondents. Of these respondents, we classified 1,964 as LGBT (198 in Brazil, 200 in China, 200 in Hong Kong, 196 in India, 200 in Russia, 193 in Singapore, 182 in South Africa, 200 in Turkey, 195 in the UK, and 200 in the US) and 10,242 as non-LGBT (953 in Brazil, 946 in China, 905 in Hong Kong, 894 in India, 974 in Russia, 814 in Singapore, 949 in South Africa, 970 in Turkey, 931 in the UK, and 1906 in the US). LGBT respondents include those who self-identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, as well as those who report that the sex assigned to them at birth does not match their current gender identity or that neither male nor female fully describes their gender. The Germany survey was conducted online between August 2015 and September 2015 among 381 LGBT respondents and 54 non-LGBT respondents. Recruitment for the Germany survey was conducted through snowball sampling initiated by one company in the financial services sector. The Germany survey findings are not included in the press release. Data from both surveys do not form a representative sample so all conclusions speak to our samples only.

Data for the multi-national survey was collected by GMI Lightspeed under the auspices of CTI, a nonprofit research organization. The Germany survey was fielded by CTI. All empirical analysis was conducted solely by CTI.

In the charts, percentages may not always add up to 100 because of computer rounding or the acceptance of multiple responses from respondents.

About the Center for Talent Innovation:

The Center for Talent Innovation (CTI) is an NYC-based think tank that focuses on global talent strategies and the retention and acceleration of well-qualified labor across the divides of demographic difference including gender, generation, geography, sexual orientation, and culture. CTI’s research partners now number more than 90 multinational corporations and organizations.

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